

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-12

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DRAFTED BY NEA/INS:DKUX:MMK
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R 021854Z MAY 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 090307

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SCUL, IN, US

SUBJECT: NORTON SIMON NATARAJ

SUMMARY: IS OUR MAN LOSING INTEREST? END SUMMARY

1. UNFORTUNATELY, SIMON FOUNDATION HAS FAILED TO MOVE BEYOND HANDSHAKE AND AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE ON DEAL WITH GOI FOR RETURN OF NATARAJ. MACFARLANE, WITH WHOM KUX HAS KEPT IN FAIRLY CLOSE TOUCH, SAYS THAT NORTON SIMON HAS NOT YET GIVEN GREEN LIGHT FOR GETTING AGREEMENT DOWN ON PAPER AS WE HAVE BEEN URGING FOR OVER MONTH. ALTHOUGH GONSALVES WILL BE IN LOS ANGELES MAY 15, MACFARLANE IS UNCERTAIN WHETHER FOUNDATION WILL BE IN POSITION TO HAVE SPECIFIC WRITTEN PROPOSAL AT THAT TIME.

2. NOT QUITE SURE - NOR APPARENTLY IS MACFARLANE - WHY THE DELAY. IT WOULD SEEM THAT AS THE HANDSHAKE WITH TIKKI KAUL FADES INTO HISTORY, SO DOES THE MEMORY OF WHAT SIMON AGREED TO DO. THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, WHICH THEN WAS THE ONLY STUMBLING BLOCK POSED BY SIMON, IS AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL, NO LONGER A PROBLEM. KUX AND GONSALVES
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HAVE HEARD FROM BUCHANAN AND HOVING THAT MET IS DELIGHTED

AT PROSPECT OF STAGING SIMON SHOW ONCE AGREEMENT WITH INDIANS SIGNED AND IS FULLY PREPARED TO GIVE EXHIBITION TOP DRAWER TREATMENT. THIS HAS ALL BEEN PASSED ON TO SIMON FOUNDATION -- AS WELL AS WORD THAT STORIES ABOUT

NATARAJ RETURN BEGINNING TO APPEAR IN PRESS -- BUT SO FAR AT LEAST THERE IS NO ACTION ON THEIR PART. WE HAVE ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT THIS IS THE TIME TO CONCLUDE DEAL, BOTH IN TERMS OF INDIAN EMBASSY'S BEING ABLE TO SELL PROPOSITION BACK HOME AND USG INTEREST IN HAVING PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT MAKE CONTRIBUTION IN CULTURAL AREA TO OVERALL IMPROVEMENT IN INDO-US RELATIONS.

3. QUESTION IS THEN WHAT, IF ANYTHING, MORE CAN BE DONE. ONE THOUGHT IS EARLY PHONE CALL OR MESSAGE FROM AMBASSADOR URGING SIMON TO WRAP UP AGREEMENT PROMPTLY, USING ARGUMENT THAT WHILE STARS NOW FAVORABLE, SITUATION MAY WELL ALTER RAPIDLY. HAVE THOUGHT OF HINTING EARLY RELEASE OF INDIAN AIDE MEMOIRE TO CUSTOMS, BUT SUSPECT THIS WILL BACKFIRE. HOPEFULLY AMBASSADOR'S MESSAGE/ CALL WOULD HELP MOVE FOUNDATION TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF GONSALVES' PRESENCE IN WEST COAST IN MID-MAY TO REACH WRITTEN AD REFERENDUM AGREEMENT. ACCORDING TO MACFARLANE, GONSALVES HAS MADE CLEAR THAT ANY DEAL WOULD STILL BE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY GOI.

4. WHAT DO YOU THINK? RUSH

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